Statement

[The following steps have been taken to improve the telephone service

1. Introduction of sophisticated electronic telephone exchanges to avoid problems inherent with electromagnetic switching equipment used hitherto.

1 2. Replacement of life expired equipment.

3. Special testing of exchange equipment particularly inter-exchange junctions i3 being undertaken to improve inter-exchange working.

4. Working of air-conditioning plants in various exchanges is being regularly monitored to ensure proper working.

5. Laying of'new junction, primary and secondary cables in ducts to protect them from external damages.

6. Pressurisation of primary, secondary and junction cables to minimise cable break-down faults.

7. Use of jelly filled cables in the dis tribution network to entry of water in the cables to avoid faults.

8. Cable trenches are being flooded bsfore being closed so as to detect any damage during trenching or laying of the cables. The public is being asked to inform Telephone Department before they take up digging; on 'dial before dig' service so as to keep liasion with other agencies who are engaged in digging.

9. Extensive patrolling of cable routes to detect any digging operations and to take precautionary measures to avoid damage to cables.

10. Provision of high grade junction cir cuits on Pulse Code Modulation, Coa xial and microwave media to provide better quality and more dependable services.

11. Rehabilitaiton of subscribers' fittings and the D. P. boxes to minimise faults on the line.

12. Replacemnet of overhead wires by insulated drop wires to avoid faults doe to kite strings, bird nests eOO. which lead to contact or low insulation faults.

13. Use of improved telephone instruments.

14. Replacement of aluminium wires in the fittings at the subscribers premises by copper wires to avoid break faults.

15. Computerisation of cable records and fault repair service to bring down duration of faults.

16. Monitoring of the automanual service and trunk service is being carried out s_0 as to ensure prompt response on these services.

17. Public grievance cells have been opened at GMs headquarters and AM* offices to provide single outlet attets-tion to the subscribers.

18. Formation of interutility coordnation boards to avoid damage. to sabha

Restriction on foreign tourists to visitMeghalaya

1649. SHRI IERLIE E. TARIANG: Will the Minister of HOME AFFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for continuing the restricted permit system for foreign tourists to Meghalaya;

(b) whether it is a fact that Meghalaya is the most peaceful state in the North-East region and much less sensitive than the State of Jammu and Kashmir;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the State of Meghalaya has great potential for earning revenue and foreign exchange from tourism; and

(d) if so, what action Government pro pose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) and (b) In the interest of national security Meghalaya

which faas been declared a sa Restricted Area under Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963, continues as such.

(c) and (b) In view of its tourist potential Foreign tourists in groups sponsored by the recognised Indian travel agencies are permitted to visit Shillong; n Meghalaya subject to certain conditions prescribed in this regard.

Announcement of a New Newsprint Policy;

1650. SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHA-KRISHNA: Will the Minister of INFOR-MATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) when the newsprint policy was announced last;

(b) since when the announcement o(f a new newsprint policy has become due;

(c) what are the reasons for delay in announcing the policy; and

(d) by when it is likely to be announced?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) to (d) Newsprint Allocation Policy was earlier announced on annual basis and the policy for the year 1984-85 was announced on 21st July, 1984. The Policy for 1985-86 could not be announced as entire gamut of distribution of newsprint , with a view to removing certain lacunae engaged the attention of the Government.

• The matter has since been finalised and the Policy applicable for the years 1986-87 and 1987-88 was announced in the Lok Sabha on 13-11-1986 and in Rajya Sabha OH 17-11-1986.

Collaboration with Natherlands in the •ale and' manufacture of telecommunications equipment

1651. SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHA-KRISHNA: Will the Minister of COM-JtfUMCATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Netherlands Govern-oat has offered to cooperate In the sale and the licenced production of equipment with co-operation in common research activities, exchange of technologies and shared training facilities so far to enable India to achieve greater self-reliance in telecommunications;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard; and

(c) what is the present state of the matter. ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) In the Third Meeting of the Indo-Nether-lands Joint Commission in April. 1986, held in Delhi, it was agreed by both sides that excellent scope exists between the two countries to increase cooperation in the field of Telecommunications. Netherlands side has offered technical cooperation and assistance in the areas of Network Development and Planning, Rurnl Telecom Development and Research & Development.

(b) and (c) These proposals are under the consideration of Government.

Indian request for co-operation in nuclear safety

1652. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL; Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has reiterated that the nuclear plants around the world are not safe and has urged for greater cooperation, especially between developing and deve loped nations on unclear safety, as report ed in the Indian Express of 13th October, 1986; and

(b) if so, what further steps Govern ment of India proposes to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECH-NOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT, ATOMIC ENERGY. ELECTRONICS AND SPACE (SHRI K. R. NARAYANAN): (a) No, Sir.